

of the Civil Rights Act were signed into law, women working full-time and year round in the United States, on average, still earn only 71 percent of the wages earned by men. This means that, for the 1996 calendar year, the wages of the average American female worker will not match those of the average male worker until April 11 of this year.

Although the pay gap has narrowed over the past two decades, unfair pay practices persist in many U.S. business sectors. Paying a woman less than a male co-worker with equal skills and job responsibilities hurts that woman and her family—not only in immediate material benefit, but also in her ability to invest and save for retirement. Working women deserve—and are demanding—fair and equal pay for their time spent on the job. Over a quarter of a million women surveyed by the Department of Labor indicated that “improving pay scales” is one of their highest priorities in bringing fairness to the workplace.

To address this problem, my Administration has moved on several fronts simultaneously: I signed the increase in the minimum wage into law, initiated a pension education campaign, strengthened equal employment law enforcement, and created a Women’s Bureau Fair Pay Clearinghouse at the Department of Labor, which disseminates information on working women’s wages and occupations and on organizations that are active in improving women’s wages. In addition, my Administration, with over 200 private-sector partners, has formed the American Savings Education Council to educate women and men on how they can ensure their financial independence in retirement. Together with renewed attention focused on the reality of pay inequity and what it means for working women across the country, these initiatives create real opportunities for employers, working women, and organizations to develop new and effective approaches that achieve pay equity.

Strong enforcement of equal employment laws also plays a critical role in resolving unfair pay. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission enforces laws that make it illegal to discriminate in wages, or to limit or segregate job applicants or employees in any way that would deprive them of opportu-

nities because of sex, race, color, religion, age, national origin, or disability.

The Department of Labor’s Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs enforces nondiscrimination and affirmative action laws that apply to employers that do business with the Federal Government, ensuring that Government contractors prevent and remedy discrimination and resolve matters of pay equity.

It is vital that we aggressively enforce our pay equity laws. Women deserve to be rewarded on an equal basis for their contributions to the American work force.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim April 11, 1997, as National Pay Inequity Awareness Day. I call upon Government officials, law enforcement agencies, business and industry leaders, educators, and all the people of the United States to recognize the full value of the skills and contributions of women in the labor force.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 15.

Remarks at the Radio and Television Correspondents Association Dinner

April 10, 1997

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Members of Congress, members of the press, fellow sufferers—[laughter]—I would like to thank the Radio and Television Correspondents Association for inviting me this evening. I want to give Terry Murphy a special thanks for the kind introduction, and also, given my condition, I’d like

to give a special thank-you to the Ridgewell Catering Company for bringing me here tonight. *[Laughter]* Enough laughs.

I have come here tonight to speak about a topic of perennial concern in Washington, something we never get around to doing anything about. And that is the close, some would even say cozy relationship, between the rarified elite who make public policy and those who report on it. And on that topic, just let me say this: Congratulations, Andrea. *[Laughter]* You know, that fella standing next to you in the newspaper photos a few days ago—*[laughter]*—he looked exactly like Alan Greenspan, only exuberant. *[Laughter]*

I want all of you to know that, until recently, I had planned out a really dramatic entrance to this dinner. *[Laughter]* And then, George Bush stole my thunder. *[Laughter]* I mean, look at this: This guy is 72 years old; he jumps out of a plane at 12,000 feet; he lands without a scratch. *[Laughter]* I fall 6 inches, and I'm crippled up for 6 months. It's ridiculous.

Now, as you might imagine, my injured knee adds complications to my schedule. In fact, you know, just when I was on the way over here tonight—*[laughter]*—as you have seen, my Press Secretary, Mike McCurry, just handed me a note. According to wire reports, former President Bush has just bungee jumped off the Seattle Space Needle. *[Laughter]*

That reminds me—I was supposed to make another announcement tonight. Mr. Murphy has asked me to tell you that the Radio and Television Correspondents Association has decided to adopt the practices of the Democratic National Committee. *[Laughter]* That means you can all pick up your \$1,000 refund checks on the way out tonight. *[Laughter]*

You know, I'm getting a little sick of these fundraising stories. *[Laughter]* But here I am, I'm doing the best to do the job the American people sent me here to do. But with all this ruckus in Washington these days, we have to work harder and harder to sort of be heard through the din. So my staff worked up a few new ideas that we thought might break through. I want you to be the judge. After all, it's your din. *[Laughter]*

Here are the suggestions: Take a cue from the TV show, "Ellen." Start a rumor that in the last Presidential press conference of the season, my character will become a libertarian. *[Laughter]* Announce that we've discovered signs of life on Mars. We already tried that, and some of you bought it; I couldn't believe it. *[Laughter]* Announce that I will fight Evander Holyfield. *[Laughter]* Anytime, anyplace. *[Laughter]* Here's the Vice President's suggestion. Sign an Executive order hiring people on welfare to install computers in our Nation's classrooms, to E-mail messages to neighborhood watch volunteers, to use their cell phones to call 100,000 community police officers, to remind the one million literacy tutors to show up for work. *[Laughter]* If all else fails, push myself down a flight of stairs. *[Laughter]* As you know, that's the one we decided to go with. *[Laughter]* It worked for a while, and I would do it again. I may have to. *[Laughter]*

Thank you very much, Mike. *[Laughter]*

Ladies and gentlemen, you will be pleased to learn that former President Bush—*[laughter]*—has just successfully jumped the Snake River Canyon on a rocket-powered motorcycle. *[Laughter]* Now, he's just taunting me. *[Laughter]*

You know, one of the results of being bummed up for awhile is that I've gotten to watch a lot more television than normal, and I spent a day in the hospital just sort of channel-flipping, "surfing," that's what you call it now. And I was amazed at the way all these different channels struggled to accurately but uniquely cover my surgery. *[Laughter]* C-SPAN, of course, provided live, uninterrupted coverage of my injured knee—*[laughter]*—while C-SPAN 2 devoted full coverage to my other knee. *[Laughter]* Within an hour of the accident, CNN had composed ominous theme music—*[laughter]*—and put up a graphic, "Breaking News, Breaking Knees." *[Laughter]* I knew it was going to be a major story when their "Headline News" devoted a full 5 seconds to it. *[Laughter]* MSNBC immediately proclaimed itself the state-of-the-art global interactive command center for all leg-related news. *[Laughter]* ESPN broke into the North Carolina-Colorado basketball game with a breathless bulletin that Greg Norman was just fine. *[Laughter]* PBS

kept interrupting coverage of my knee for pledge drives. [Laughter] For every \$100 donation, you got a commemorative X-ray of my leg. [Laughter] Bob Novak went on "Crossfire" to argue the positive aspects of debilitating knee injuries for Democrats. [Laughter] And then, there was MTV. All they wanted to know was, did I wear a hospital gown or pajamas? [Laughter]

Press Secretary Mike McCurry. Another one.

The President. Thank you, Mike. [Laughter] Ladies and gentlemen, President Bush has just had himself manacled, placed inside a padlocked trunk—[laughter]—and submerged off the coast of Kennebunkport. [Laughter] The clock is ticking. [Laughter] Our prayers are with him. [Laughter]

Anyway, I'm back on my feet, and I'm working for the American people. Congress is back in session this week. That came as a surprise to people in Washington who didn't know it was away. [Laughter] Things have been so slow this year, C-SPAN is actually showing reruns of the 104th Congress.

We can't get agreement to change the consumer price index; that's the hangup on this whole budget deal. And there are Democrats and Republicans in the House—they're scared to death of it. But you know, a small change in the CPI could shave billions of dollars from the deficit, add years and years to the life of the Social Security Trust Fund.

Now, I know this is a complicated issue for some people, and I've been looking for some simple way to explain it. And so, consider how we might re-index some other statistics. For example, a report said last month that we Americans are the heaviest people in the world. Working together, reaching across party lines, we can change all that. [Laughter] Instead of 16 ounces to a pound, we'll say there's 20 ounces. [Laughter] That way, a person who weighs 200 pounds would weigh 160 pounds. Think about it: overnight, Democrats and Republicans can make America the thinnest nation in the world. [Laughter]

Let me tell you, I'm doing the best I can, but actually I'm kind of hurting. The worst thing about this injury is, it's hard to stand for long periods of time and about this time I start to get tired. So I'm going to sort of

sit down with a confession. When I signed that Executive order banning cloning research, it was too late to do anything about an experiment or two that had already been started. [Laughter] But one of them has come in handy in moments like this.

Bill, would you mind? [Laughter]

[At this point, "Saturday Night Live" comedian Darrell Hammond joined the President at the dais and made brief remarks impersonating the President.]

The President. I have to take this over before it gets out of hand. [Laughter] God knows, I can't afford to jeopardize my relationship with the press corps. [Laughter] But I want to thank you, Bill, or "Mr. President." By the way, I wrote up a to-do list for you for the next couple of days.

As usual, there's the morning jog; you have to do that now. [Laughter] Tomorrow at 3:30 p.m., I have a conflict. I have a root canal appointment and a press conference in the East Room. I know it's going to hurt, but would you mind doing the press conference? [Laughter] No, wait a minute. I couldn't ask anybody else to do that, even me.

Actually, I enjoy these press conferences, and I enjoy coming here every year. I thank you all for what you've done to sustain our democracy for nearly 225 years. Our country is still a work in progress, and I look forward to building on that progress with you. I even look forward to these dinners, and I really wouldn't want to send anyone else in my place. So I want to thank all of you for having Hillary, me, and me here this evening. [Laughter]

In closing, let me say, we must find common ground. [Laughter] We are going to build that bridge to the 21st century. [Laughter] I do have to refer you to Lanny Davis on that one. Ya-da, ya-da, ya-da.

Good night, and thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:28 p.m., at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Terry Murphy, chairman, Radio and Television Correspondents Association, and Andrea Mitchell, NBC News. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With the American Society of Newspapers Editors

April 11, 1997

The President. Thank you very much. And thank you, Bob, for reminding me of my best line from the speech last night [Laughter] George Bush got the last laugh. [Laughter] Twelve thousand feet, not a scratch. I fell 6 inches, I'm hobbled for 6 months. [Laughter]

I'm delighted to be here. I want to thank you for having me and congratulate this year's writing award winners. I missed last year, and I'm sorry I couldn't come, but the Vice President told me all about it. And because he came here, I had to listen one more time and look one more time at all those pictures from his days as a long-haired reporter for the National Tennessean. [Laughter]

This is what it's really like. I don't mind learning about global warming and high technology and everything, but I had to learn all about the newspaper business all over again. I hear that speech about once every 3 months from him. [Laughter]

You know, times have changed remarkably since Will Rogers said, "All I know is what I see in the papers." Today, we live in a world with 500 channels, literally hundreds of thousands of web sites exploding all the time—we're trying to develop the Internet, too—but still, the role that you play in informing and educating Americans and in helping them to make the right kind of choices is terribly important.

I want to talk today about one of those choices that will have a profound effect on all of our lives and the lives of our children in the next century, and that is the choices we must make to sustain America's leadership in the world.

Four years ago I came into office determined to renew our strength and prosperity here at home. But I also believed that in the global society of the 21st century, the dividing line between foreign and domestic policy was increasingly an artificial distinction. After all, our national security depends on strong families, safe streets, and world-class education. And our success at home clearly de-

pends on our strength and willingness and our ability to lead abroad.

The conviction that America must be strong and involved in the world has really been the bedrock of our foreign policy for the last 50 years. After World War II, a generation of farsighted leaders forged NATO, which has given us a half century of security and played a strong role in ending the cold war. They built the United Nations so that a hard-won peace would not be lost. They launched the Marshall plan to rebuild a Europe ravaged by war. They created the World Bank and other international financial institutions to pave the way for unprecedented prosperity for American people and others around the world. They did this throughout a half century, Republicans and Democrats together, united in bipartisan support for the American leadership that has been essential to the strength and security of the American people for half a century now.

Now we stand at the dawn of a new century and a new millennium—another moment to be farsighted, another moment to guarantee America another 50 years of security and prosperity. We've largely swept away the blocks and barriers that once divided whole continents. But as borders become more open and the flow of information, technology, money, trade, and people across the borders are larger and more rapid, the line between domestic and foreign policy continues to blur.

And we can only preserve our security and our well-being at home by being strongly involved in the world beyond our borders. From fighting terrorism and drug trafficking to limiting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to protecting the global environment, we stand to gain from working with other nations, and we will surely lose if we fail to do so.

Just as American leaders of both political parties did 50 years ago, we have to come together to take new initiatives and revitalize and reform old structures so that we can prepare our country to succeed and win and make the world a better place in this new era.

You know, it is commonplace to say that since the end of the cold war, America stands alone as the world's only superpower. That